United Nations A/71/152

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 July 2016
English
Original: Arabic/English/Spanish

Seventy-first session
Item 97 (e) of the preliminary list*
General and complete disarmament

Relationship between disarmament and development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/32. It discusses the further strengthening within the United Nations of the relationship between disarmament and development. In addition, the report contains information received from Member States on the subject.

* A/71/50.

16-12131 (E) 010816

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 1 of its resolution 70/32 on the relationship between disarmament and development, the General Assembly stressed the central role of the United Nations in the relationship between disarmament and development and requested the Secretary-General to strengthen further the role of the Organization in this field.

2. In paragraph 2 of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to take action, through appropriate organs and within available resources, for the implementation of the action programme adopted at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.[1]

3. In paragraph 6 of the resolution, the General Assembly reiterated its invitation to Member States to provide the Secretary-General with information regarding measures and efforts to devote part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development. In paragraph 7, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its seventy-first session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

4. On 8 February 2016, the Secretariat sent a note verbale to Member States seeking their views on this issue. At the time of writing, replies had been received from Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Lebanon, Portugal and Ukraine. This information is contained in section III below.

II. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 70/32

5. During the reporting period, the United Nations continued to strengthen its role regarding the relationship between disarmament and development. The inter-agency coordination of these issues is taken up primarily within the Inter-Agency Working Group on Mine Action, which includes landmines and cluster munitions in its scope and is chaired by the Mine Action Service, and the Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism, chaired by the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Both mechanisms ensure that the United Nations system continues to pay full attention to the development-related aspects of arms regulation and disarmament.

6. A case in point is the coordinated support that the United Nations system has provided over the past decade to the idea of integrating security-related themes into the possible follow-up of the Millennium Development Goals.[2] Now that this goal has been achieved with agreement on target 16.4 under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to significantly reduce illicit arms flows, the United Nations will endeavour to assist States further in strengthening their capacity to attain this target. The outcome of the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in June 2016, showed further consensual support for this direction. In the outcome, States are encouraged to take advantage of the implementation of and reporting under the Programme of Action to support data collection for relevant Sustainable

[1] See A/CONF.130/39.

[2] See e.g. S/2008/258 and A/64/228.

Development Goal indicators and to provide assistance in building sustainable capacity to report on small arms and light weapons that have been seized and which have been recorded and traced.

7. Other examples of the increased connections between disarmament, arms regulation and development include the establishment of the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation,[3] the close cooperation between United Nations offices and agencies on establishing voluntary standards for small arms control and for ammunition management, which are available in particular for capacity-building,[4] and the programmes undertaken by the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament.

8. In its resolution 70/32, the General Assembly urged the international community to devote part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development, with a view to reducing the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries. The Secretariat has not been made aware of national budget increases for economic and social development as a direct result of disarmament and arms limitation agreements.

9. All Member States have committed, in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations, to "the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources". This implies that arms industries cannot be for-profit undertakings fully comparable to other commercial businesses intent on maximizing turnover. Instead of venturing towards possibly destabilizing accumulations of weapons, States are encouraged to have their military strategies and budgets include to the maximum extent those plans and activities that explore maintaining undiminished national security through confidence-building measures. Such strategies are fully in line with the Secretary-General's increased emphasis on preventive diplomacy. The Secretariat stands ready with knowledge and expertise to assist States and regional organizations in these endeavours.

III. Information received from Governments

Colombia

[Original: Spanish]
[31 May 2016]

The Republic of Colombia, as a State committed to disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control and promotion of national development, places the highest priority to the development of national policies to foster the elimination of elements that may hinder growth and environmental, economic and social development.

While Colombia recognizes that there is a two-way relationship between development and armed violence, it believes that weapons in themselves are not the fundamental cause of violence and conflict. On the contrary, it is its understanding that such issues are a manifestation of criminal conduct associated with issues such as drugs, terrorism and transnational organized crime.

[3] See www.un.org/disarmament/unscar.

[4] See www.smallarmsstandards.org; www.un.org/disarmament/ammunition.

In that connection, our country's position has been to adopt a two-pronged strategy: at the national level, strengthening national policies for the prevention of violence and the promotion of development; and at the international level, establishing international standards to ensure that those issues are addressed in a collaborative manner.

In light of the above, the Republic of Colombia wishes to highlight the following:

- Colombia continues to play an active role in the negotiation and adoption of international instruments on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.
- Examples of such instruments include the recently ratified Convention on Cluster Munitions, which, along with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, has a major impact on the quality of life of the civilian population.
- Our country is also active in development. Since the structuring of the post-2015 development agenda, Colombia has become the torch-bearer for the establishment of objectives, goals and indicators to measure the impact of national policies and the adoption of appropriate measures to create better conditions for social, environmental and economic development.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[28 April 2016]

The commitment which the United Nations made in 1945 to promote social progress and improve people's standard of living and their economic and social development remains a pipe dream. While 795 million people suffer from hunger, 781 million adults are illiterate and 17,000 children die every day of curable diseases, military expenditure in 2015 amounted to $1.7 trillion, an increase of 1 per cent compared to 2014.

The exorbitant amounts currently spent on weapons should be used instead to promote peace, economic and social development and a life of dignity for all human beings. The resources currently devoted to armaments could be used to help achieve the 17 Goals and 169 targets of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The very survival of humanity is continuously threatened by the existence of more than 15,850 nuclear weapons. Cuba reiterates its support for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The resources now being used to build up nuclear arsenals should be used instead for the benefit of humanity and the eradication of poverty.

Resources released through disarmament measures should be devoted to development, particularly in the least developed countries, as established in the Declaration on the Right to Development, adopted by the General Assembly in 1986.

Cuba reiterates its proposal that half of current military expenditure be allocated to an international United Nations-managed fund established for that purpose. Such a fund should be in a position to ensure sustainable socioeconomic development and help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The United Nations should play a central role in highlighting the interrelationship between disarmament and development, primarily in the implementation of the action programme adopted at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

The action programme envisages the adoption of measures to reduce the level and magnitude of military expenditures and reallocate those resources to social and economic development in developing countries, and review issues and develop studies and plans related to the conversion of military industry to civilian production.

The country's Revolutionary Armed Forces have placed their military resources and capabilities whenever necessary, including military units and camps, military transportation and aircraft, engineering resources, medical services and other logistical resources at the service of Cuba's economic and social development. Relevant examples include the relocation of the "Granma" Naval Academy so that its former premises could accommodate the Latin American School of Medicine, which is now being used to provide free training for young people from over 100 countries, most of whom are from low-income families, to become doctors; the provision of military personnel and fumigation equipment for the campaign to eradicate disease vectors; the support provided for food production; and the services offered by military construction companies for the building of schools, canals, reservoirs, roads and natural disaster evacuation routes.

Cuba will continue to fulfil the commitments under the action programme adopted at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

A naval base is located on a part of Cuban territory that is illegally occupied by the United States of America. The Guantánamo military base must be closed immediately and the territory returned to its rightful owner, the Cuban people, so that it may be used for the implementation of economic and social development projects.

Cuba reiterates that the international community should take practical and urgent steps to ensure that the resources now being used for military purposes are reallocated to development activities.

Guatemala

[Original: Spanish]
[29 April 2016]

With the signing of the peace agreements, Guatemala made various commitments to change the economic, social and political status of its people, proposed new definitions on security and amended various laws, including the current Arms and Ammunition Act.

The agreement on the strengthening of civilian power and the role of the army in a democratic society set out guidelines for the reform of the security sector and established separate functions for the army and the national civilian police. The agreement also established the concept of comprehensive security, which is intended to protect basic human rights and dovetails with the United Nations international definition of human security, focuses on vulnerable sectors, and recognizes the relationship between security and development. The State has an obligation to control and regulate access to and use of arms, provide security and strive to build a culture of peace.

At the international level, Guatemala is a party to various instruments, including the Arms Trade Treaty, the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America, the Code of Conduct for Central American States on the Transfer of Arms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Materials, the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

In the area of nuclear disarmament, Guatemala is committed and supports all initiatives aimed at the total and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons. It is also a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty of Tlatelolco, among other instruments.

With regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which underscores the relationship between peace, security and economic and social development, the National Development Plan K'atun, Nuestra Guatemala 2032 (K'atun, Our Guatemala 2032) is noteworthy. It lays the groundwork for development in Guatemala and the establishment of conditions that determine and ensure social development and human security in the economic, political, social, cultural and environmental arenas. With regard to comprehensive security, it is worth noting that human security has been identified as a basic condition for comprehensive development and that a number of strategic actions to be undertaken in 2016-2020 have been articulated.

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

[Original: English]
[17 June 2016]

- Disarmament and development are closely interrelated in national, regional and international arenas, and simultaneously addressing them can contribute positively in dealing with the new challenges for the international community in the fields of security and development. That is the main reason for the founders of the United Nations recognizing, in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations, the relationship between "regulation of armaments" and "the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources" and their role in promoting "the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security". Now that our "world is overarmed and peace

is underfunded", as rightly expressed by the United Nations Secretary-General, these issues are more relevant than they were in the 1950s.

- As one of the founding members of the United Nations, the Islamic Republic of Iran shares the concerns over increasing global military expenditure, which can have a negative impact on development and divert financial, technological and human resources from development objectives.

- The harrowing spectre of the existence of more than 16,000 nuclear weapons and the excessive amounts currently spent on weapons at the global level, which amounted in 2014 to more than $4.6 billion a day and a total of $1,776 billion, representing 2.3 per cent of global gross domestic product or $245 per person, are hard to explain in a world where such resources could be used to meet some of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Sharing the views of the United Nations Secretary-General that "there can be no development without peace and no peace without development [and] disarmament can provide the means for both", Iran is of the view that, as security, disarmament and development are mutually reinforcing, it is in the interest of promoting international peace and security that disarmament and development policies should be pursued simultaneously.

- In this context, Iran also stresses the importance of the recommendations made by the Group of Governmental Experts on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, contained in its report (see A/59/119), primarily reduction in the level and magnitude of military expenditures, reallocation of the released resources for social and economic development in the developing countries, and possible conversion of military industry to civilian production.

- Moreover, Iran highlights the importance of promoting disarmament efforts, in particular the urgent need for the commencement of negotiations for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and to provide for their destruction. Likewise, efforts to advance adherence to, and compliance with, international legally binding instruments banning weapons of mass destruction, as well as their universalization, need to be redoubled.

- Such efforts are of utmost importance in such a region as the Middle East, where the already complicated security situation — as a result of possession of hundreds of nuclear weapons, as well as other weapons of mass destruction, and a large arsenal of sophisticated conventional weapons by the Israeli regime, along with its expansionist policy in the region and its long record in defying the international norms and refraining from acceding to any of the international legally binding instruments banning weapons of mass destruction — is exacerbated in recent years by the massive presence of foreign forces, large flow of foreign terrorist fighters, aggression and considerable arms imports by certain oil-rich countries, as well as manifold increase in their military budgets.

- Unfortunately, this situation continues to destabilize societies, hinder their economic and social development and divert the resources from development activities to those spiteful purposes in a region where there is a dire need for development efforts.

- Despite being surrounded and affected by such a situation, the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to have one of the lowest levels of military expenditure in a region where only a surge in weapons purchases by a certain oil-rich Persian Gulf littoral State helped to push global arms sales up by more than 10 per cent in 2015 — the largest yearly increase in the past decade — which placed that country at the top of the list of biggest arms-importing countries in the world.

- Against this background, Iran continues to highlight the importance of efforts aimed at reducing military expenditures and excessive export and accumulation of conventional weapons in different regions, thereby preventing the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources, directing released resources to development efforts and promoting peace and security at the regional and international levels.

- Concerned by the lack of progress in international efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, and cognizant of the fact that disarmament and development do not automatically trigger each other and that disarmament must be accompanied by efforts that result in sustainable economic development, the Islamic Republic of Iran calls for the implementation of internationally agreed development commitments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- Accordingly, in the post-adoption era of the 2030 Agenda, it falls upon the United Nations to realign its strategic plans to highlight the interrelationship between disarmament and development. Therefore, greater efforts should be made to integrate disarmament and development activities and to refer to disarmament as an important contribution to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

Jordan

[Original: Arabic]
[8 April 2016]

The United Nations and the international community have given considerable attention to disarmament and socioeconomic development. This topic is linked to the issue of the arms race and continuing military expenditure, which negatively affect the world's human, financial and natural resources and place a significant burden on national economies. Military expenditure is in turn connected with the instability of the international security environment, the spread of armed and other conflict, and lack of trust, all of which have fuelled the arms race.

Specialists estimate that real military expenditure has seen a dramatic increase since the 1980s, as compared with previous years. Annual expenditure grew to 15 per cent, and military expenditure passed the $100 billion mark in 1990. Statistics show that military expenditure in the period 1989-1991 was far greater than in the period between the two world wars. Global military expenditure then increased even further, reaching $1,630 billion in 2010. Expenditure in the Middle East was $111 billion in 2010; the figure for 2015-2016 is not yet known.

The Arab world accounts for over 60 per cent of the arms trade in the Third World. Growing arms purchases have brought about a rise in foreign debt, hindering the development process and related projects.

Development, the acquisition of armaments and military expenditure are closely interrelated. Rising military expenditure causes a shortfall in resources that are vital for development.

The Arab-Israeli conflict, Israel's excessive use of armaments and its ongoing construction of a strategic and nuclear weapons arsenal have all caused States of the region and Arab States to seek to obtain weapons in order to achieve a strategic balance in conventional and non-conventional weapons. As a result, expenditure has been redirected from development to the military.

The financing of the conflict has caused a significant shortfall in the development process in the region. Some States have borrowed funds and exploited their own natural resources in order to invest in armaments instead of developing their own countries.

From a humanitarian perspective, the conflict has caused a considerable number of deaths, permanent disabilities and injuries. It has exacerbated unemployment and caused substantial refugee flows, which have destabilized the region's economies, societies, industry, education and development planning.

Terrorism and terrorist organizations have directly affected security and stability in States around the world. The consequences in political, economic, social and humanitarian terms have been drastic, indeed catastrophic. States have taken on high levels of expenditure in order to tackle and suppress terrorism, and their development programmes have suffered as a result.

As regards security and border control, States allocate a share of their financial resources to confronting smugglers, saboteurs and infiltrators in order to protect their borders. This, too, has added to their military expenditure.

States are focused on the need to preserve their security, something that is a natural right recognized by the United Nations. Military expenditure can, however, be reduced without affecting security interests, so long as States that adopt such an approach can be given international guarantees that they will be protected.

If military expenditure is curbed and the concept of security through confidence-building measures is strengthened, it will be possible to allocate financial, human and material resources to civilian purposes and scientific and economic projects that would boost development in the States in question.

At several forums on armaments, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has stated that it is fully committed to United Nations non-proliferation and disarmament programmes. It has taken the following steps to develop its legislation at the domestic, regional and international levels:

(a) At the national level, the Jordanian Government has stated that it is fully committed to the conventions on disarmament, arms control and other relevant topics; to Jordan's Environmental Protection Act (2003); and to the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. Jordan has also combated discrimination and put in place procedures to uphold the right to development. It has allowed, indeed encouraged, equal opportunities for all people to access basic resources, such as education, health-care services, food, housing and employment. Jordan has also opened the way for women to participate in all available areas of life in the country. It has removed landmines from 45,000 dunums of land out of a

total 60,000 dunums of minefields. A large proportion of the land has been allocated to agriculture, enhancing development in the country.

(b) At the regional level, Jordan has ratified the conventions on armaments and arms control concluded at the League of Arab States level. In view of the current circumstances and the influx of refugees into Jordan, the country faces significant challenges with regard to participation in development activities in the region. Jordan therefore emphasizes the need to bring an end to wars and restore peace and stability in the region, particularly in neighbouring States. As Jordan occupies a strategic location in the region, it encourages regional States to invest in the country and has facilitated that process accordingly, thereby fostering development in the region.

(c) At the international level, Jordan has acceded to numerous international conventions on disarmament and non-proliferation. It has played a proactive role in advocating for peace, stability and an end to war and colonialism around the world. It continues to take part in operations to keep the peace, restore security and stability, and promote development in numerous countries around the world.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[8 April 2016]

The Ministry of National Defence wishes to make the following points:

Lebanon has consistently supported instruments related to disarmament in general and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in particular, because such weapons constitute a threat to security and peace, and the money that is spent on them could be used in and contribute to the advancement of various spheres of development.

Lebanon is beset by armed violence and is in need of all possible assistance in relieving the suffering that it causes. Notwithstanding the security and military circumstances that are currently affecting the country, and the onerous duties that the army must undertake both along the borders and inside the country with a view to implementing Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), all means available are being used to promote economic and social development.

Portugal

[Original: English]
[15 April 2016]

Portugal is a party to all relevant disarmament conventions, which establish the obligation of States parties not only to destroy their existing stockpile of landmines and cluster munitions but also to conduct clearance activities in mined areas under their jurisdiction. In fact, the aforementioned weapons gravely hinder the economic and social development of affected communities by preventing access to farmland, pastures and other vital resources. The humanitarian consequences of these kinds of weapons must be pointed out and should be regarded as an essential element in the universalization efforts for both instruments.

Recently, on a multinational level, Portugal has participated in the Open Working Group for the negotiation of the development objectives in the post-2015 development agenda, struggling for the inclusion of a specific objective on matters of peace and security. In this context, Portugal has seen with great satisfaction the inclusion of Goal 16, Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

In 2012, Portugal continued its cooperation with Mozambique regarding landmine clearance and disposal, namely by granting access to maps and relevant cartography, of which copies were made available to the authorities of Mozambique.

In this context, a delegation of Mozambique from the National Demining Institute visited the archives of the Ministry of National Defence of Portugal, as well as the Tropical Research Institute, a public research and development institution that holds the Overseas Historical Archive, a vast cartographic archive.

In June 2014, Portugal participated in the Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention held in Maputo and had the honour to be a friend of the presidency.

Portugal signed a country programme framework with the International Atomic Energy Agency, in which cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries is included as a development cooperation measure regarding non-proliferation and disarmament.

On different occasions, Portugal has raised in its bilateral contacts the issue of disarmament as an element that should be taken into account in development strategies.

Portugal adopted, in 2009, the National Strategy for Security and Development. The Strategy focuses on coherence and efficiency and ensures better coordination of all Portuguese programmes. The Strategy also promotes a broader approach and reinforces the priority of human security as a major goal in Portuguese cooperation policy.

Ukraine

[Original: English]
[29 April 2016]

Ukraine understands the importance of redirecting the expenditures from military to civil purposes. We fully support the endeavours of States and diverse international governmental and non-governmental organizations to undertake measures and efforts in this regard.

At the same time, owing to the ongoing aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and its temporary occupation of the territory of Ukraine, namely the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, much to our regret, we are not in a position to fulfil such endeavours.

We seek to restore peace in the east of Ukraine, reinstate full control over our internationally recognized borders and maintain security and confidence in our future. While the aggressor constantly violates and neglects the core international principles and norms and poses a threat to Ukraine, we have no other choice but to strengthen its military capabilities.